

American companies were unable to hire nearly 90,000 high-skilled workers essential to help grow their domestic businesses, develop innovative technologies at home rather than abroad, and compete internationally. Keep in mind most of these folks we have educated in our colleges and universities. They could be of great help to us.

I have been trying to get H-1B expansion through here for a number of months. I think we will get it through honorably. In response to this crisis I worked with my friends Senators KLOBUCHAR, RUBIO, and COONS to introduce the bipartisan immigration innovation or the I-Squared Act. Our bill provides a thoughtful, lasting legislative framework that would increase the number of H-1B visas, based on annual market demand, to attract the highly skilled workers and innovators our economy so desperately needs.

Unilateralism is not the way forward on immigration. If the President is serious about enacting meaningful immigration reform, he can choose to take the first essential step. Even in the current partisan climate there is a widespread consensus and real opportunity for bipartisan, bicameral reform for our outdated visa system for economically essential high-skilled immigrants.

The concrete legislative victory where there is already considerable consensus would help build trust and good will among those who disagree sharply over other areas of immigration policy and would mark a critical first step along the path to broader reform.

For the life of me I cannot understand why the President doesn't accept this hand we are extending to him, knowing that we educate these people, get them their college degrees, their master's degrees, their doctoral degrees, their Ph.D.s, and then we push them out of the country when they want to stay and help us in the continually evolving and impressive high-tech world. It is mind-boggling to me that we do this.

Canada even advertises in California and in the States south of the Canadian border: Come to Canada. You are welcome here. I commend Canada for having the brains and guts and ability and the political instincts to attract these very highly educated—educated in the United States—people, to help them in their high-tech world, in their engineering world, in their mathematical world, in their science world. Of course we can name a whole host of other areas where they are now helping Canadians when they were educated here, wanted to stay here, wanted to be part of America, and we could not provide a means whereby these people could help us and at the same time an intelligent means that people in our society could accept.

That is the not the only action we could take. Naturally we should work together as Democrats and Republicans to do real immigration reform. We

have 11 million or more people here who aren't going to go back to their countries. Many of them have never been in their countries, such as the children who were born here and young children who were brought here and never knew anything about their parents' former country. We have to solve these problems, and we don't do it by unilateral actions by a President who basically doesn't seem to give a darn, except for his own unilateral approach to things. That is not what the Presidency should be.

There are three branches of government. They are coequal. The President should enforce laws that are enacted only by Congress. The Supreme Court should interpret laws that are enacted by Congress if there are reasons for doing so. In this case we have a President who basically is ignoring the law, just acting on his own, as though Congress doesn't mean a thing, even though it means everything in these areas.

I counsel the President to change these ways and work with us. I think there will be more people willing to work with him should he do so, and we can solve these problems—we can solve them—not in some stupid, unilateral way that is going to create more problems than it solves but in a way the American people will accept.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, in the waning days of the 113th Congress it is a bittersweet moment as many of us are saying goodbye—although not on a permanent basis but at least in terms of our official relationships working together as Senators—to so many of our good friends and valued colleagues. Every other December we find ourselves bidding farewell to some of the most admired and respected Members of this Chamber. Today I want to say a few words about three of these esteemed Members, starting with my good friend, the senior Senator from Georgia.

SAXBY CHAMBLISS

SAXBY CHAMBLISS and I arrived in the Senate at the same time following the 2002 elections. At the time, the war on terrorism, as we all know, was barely a year old, and it was by far and away the biggest issue on the minds of Americans across the country and in the Halls of Congress. Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS immediately established himself as one of the Senate's most important leaders on national security

issues, which came as no surprise to anyone who watched his career in the House of Representatives. Indeed, in his capacity as chairman of the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security, he oversaw the first official investigation of the 9/11 attacks. It is hard to believe it has now been more than 13 years since that fateful day, but Senator CHAMBLISS has never lost sight of the continuing threat posed by radical Islamic terrorists and he has never stopped working to uphold bipartisan support for strong national security policies. He has been a consistent leader on important pieces of legislation such as the PATRIOT Act and on the detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay. He has also been a leader on the Armed Services Committee on the annual Defense authorization bill which we will be taking up later this week and on controversial but important topics such as the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Most recently on the campaign to destroy the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Senator CHAMBLISS again has been one of the leading voices helping us find our way to the right strategy and the right policy. In short, name any high-profile national security issue and there is a good chance SAXBY CHAMBLISS has been driving the debate and working to move the United States in the right direction. I know he is also especially proud of his efforts to improve current retirement policies for members of the National Guard and military Reserves.

Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS comes from a State where agriculture is the single largest industry and he spent 6 years as chairman or ranking member of the Senate agriculture committee. He was one of the first Members of our class in 2002 to serve as a chairman of any standing committee, something we were all a little bit envious of, early on in his first term of office. But he has worked on several tough farm bills during the time he has been in Congress and he has been our go-to Member on all related issues.

In fact, Senator CHAMBLISS understands these issues almost better than anyone on both sides of the aisle, which is another way of saying he understands the challenges facing American farmers better than almost anyone here. That understanding allowed him to play a key role in reforming Federal crop insurance.

Folks down in Georgia have been justly appreciative of Senator CHAMBLISS's work on agriculture policy, and they also appreciate his efforts to accelerate the Savannah Harbor Expansion Project through a Federal-State partnership, which was officially signed back in October. It is an impressive list of accomplishments, and I know I speak for all of our Members on both sides of the aisle and staffers alike, when I say that SAXBY CHAMBLISS will be missed as much for his warmth and friendship as for his policy work.

As a diehard Atlanta Braves and Georgia Bulldogs fan, he is equally at ease discussing baseball, football, quail hunting or national security. He is unfailingly kind, thoughtful, and considerate to everyone with whom he works in this Chamber—whether Senator, staffer or casual visitor.

SAXBY is now preparing for his life's next great chapter, which he will spend with his wife Julianne, to whom he has been married for nearly half a century, their two children, and six grandchildren, which I know bring them a lot of joy.

I wish my good friend all the best in his retirement, and I wish the entire Chambliss family a never-ending supply of health and happiness.

MIKE JOHANNIS

Next, I would like to turn to my colleague from Nebraska, the senior Senator MIKE JOHANNIS. Even if MIKE JOHANNIS had never been a Senator, he would have compiled an extraordinary career of public service. It started with a stint on the Lancaster County Board of Commissioners and continued with 2 years on the Lincoln City Council, followed by 8 years as mayor of Lincoln, NE.

In 1999 MIKE left the mayor's office and moved over to the Nebraska State Capitol, where he served for 6 years as Governor. He said one of his proudest gubernatorial accomplishments was enacting a mental health reform law that helped improve the lives of some of Nebraska's neediest and most vulnerable residents. That to me tells a lot about his character and sense of compassion.

Born and raised as a farm boy, MIKE was named America's 28th Secretary of Agriculture in 2005. Over the next 3 years, he held more than 50 separate forums on the farm bill—more than 50. Not surprisingly, he continued to work on agriculture-related issues when he joined the Senate. Indeed, he has been a true leader, fighting passionately to defend the rights and livelihood of farmers and ranchers everywhere—especially in Nebraska.

These are issues that are vitally important to millions and millions of Americans, including MIKE's constituents, but they are not the kind of issues that help land you prime time appearances on cable news. Luckily for us, MIKE doesn't care about media attention, but what he does care about is doing the right thing for his State and for our country.

He understands something that many of us too quickly forget—that taxes and regulations should be forced to pass a simple cost-benefit test. That is why MIKE worked so hard to block the national energy tax known as cap and trade, and that is why he has consistently demanded that the Environmental Protection Agency and other Federal agencies demonstrate how their proposed rules would affect American jobs and American workers.

It is also why he has so aggressively pushed to abolish the IRS 1099 report-

ing requirement in ObamaCare, which would have placed a costly new burden on America's small-business owners and indirectly on the jobs that they create. MIKE did more than anyone else to help highlight the problems with this requirement and to demand its repeal. Thanks in large part to his efforts, 81 Members of this Chamber voted to abolish it back in 2011.

There is an old cliché in politics that there are two types of politicians—the show horses and workhorses. MIKE has never sought the limelight, and has certainly done more than his fair share of the work. But he has done so in a very quiet and thoughtful manner. He is someone who has kept a low profile while working behind the scenes, building bipartisan consensus and being infallibly polite and gentlemanly in the process.

He is the type of Senator who is universally admired and respected by all of our colleagues. His accomplishments here in the Senate—I have just mentioned a few—have been manifold. Yet I am quite certain his proudest accomplishments are his family—his wife Stephanie, their two children, and five grandchildren. They have been generous enough to share MIKE with us for the past 6 years, and now it is time for MIKE to be with the people he cares about the most. We will miss him a whole lot, but he is moving on to perhaps the most rewarding chapter of his life.

MIKE, thanks for all you have done. Thanks for your service, your guidance, and most of all for your friendship.

TOM COBURN

I will close my remarks today on our retiring colleagues by paying tribute to Dr. TOM COBURN. He is someone we have all come to know and admire over 20 years as a relentless fighter for limited government and conservative values here in the Congress.

TOM can be a very charming guy, but I know he can also be a pain in our side when he is determined to make sure he gets a chance to get a vote on an important matter here in the Senate. I think he is comfortable in both of those roles. In fact, I know he is.

TOM COBURN is a man of strong principle, a man of great integrity, and, perhaps just as importantly, a man of remarkable humility. Our country has benefited greatly from the wisdom and leadership TOM has provided during his service in Congress—first in the House and then in the Senate. I have been in the Senate now for a little more than a decade, and during that time our colleague from Oklahoma has done more than anyone else in this Chamber to eliminate wasteful spending, expose fraud and abuse in the Federal budget, and get our entitlement programs on a sustainable path. TOM would be the first one to say that job has just begun, but he has certainly given it everything he has.

He has educated our Nation on the fiscal threat we live under and what it

means for our children and grandchildren, and he has worked tirelessly to correct it.

He has done a remarkable job as the ranking member of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, as well as his service on the intelligence and banking committees.

Furthermore, TOM has been an unyielding force for protecting liberty and improving access to affordable health care by proposing positive patient-oriented alternatives, and for these reasons and many more I am grateful for his service.

But perhaps the thing he does not want to be remembered for—but that has made such a profound impression on many of us—is his courage and ability to deal with the fact that he is a three-time cancer survivor. Even last week, I know he was receiving treatment for this most recent flare up, but he will be back here today. He will be doing what he does best, and that is fighting for his principles and perhaps causing more than a little bit of turbulence in the process in this otherwise stayed Chamber.

I know I speak for this entire Chamber when I say it is an honor to serve with a man such as TOM COBURN. I know this to be true because Tom is well respected on both sides of the aisle.

In fact, when Time magazine named TOM one of the 100 most influential people in the world in 2013, a friend of TOM's and former Democratic Senator wrote:

The people of Oklahoma are lucky to have someone like Tom representing them in Washington—someone who speaks his mind, sticks to his principles, and is committed to the people he was elected to serve.

The friend I am referring to who made those remarks is none other than our President, Barack Obama, when he served with TOM in the Senate. When the President said that, he found out that TOM received a number of angry letters from constituents that said he and President Obama looked a little too chummy together, to which TOM replied—and this is classic TOM COBURN: "What better way to influence someone than to love them."

This serves as a testament to his character. You see, TOM has an extraordinary ability not just to win the respect of those who agree with him but the admiration and respect of those who disagree with him as well. That is a rare thing in politics and especially in today's society.

Nevertheless, TOM has spent his career promoting what is good for the country while never wavering from his personal conversations. Along the way he has racked up a lengthy list of accomplishments that protect taxpayers and increase transparency in government.

TOM's résumé proves he has been a leader not only in Congress but in every aspect of his life. For example, I think many of our colleagues don't realize he had a distinguished career in

business and medicine before he got here. TOM served as president of the school of business student council while getting his accounting degree at Oklahoma State University. Later he went back to law school—excuse me, that was a Freudian slip he wouldn't be happy with. Later he went back to medical school, where he trained to become a physician and served as president of his class at the University of Oklahoma medical school.

TOM has a lot to be proud of about his service in the House and in the Senate. But, again, like all of us, he is most proud of his family. He has been married to the former Miss Oklahoma for nearly 50 years, and he and Carolyn have three daughters and seven grandchildren. Meanwhile, in his career as a physician, he has delivered more than 4,000 babies, which perhaps explains the vote totals in some of his elections, because I am sure many of them have grown up to vote for him.

The things that I mentioned are only a few of TOM COBURN's long list of notable achievements. Knowing TOM and his work ethic, I have no doubt he will be giving 110 percent right up until the last minute he serves in the 113th Congress on January 3, 2015.

I wish TOM and his family the very best as they enter the next season of life.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTES TO DEPARTING SENATORS

MARK PRYOR

Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, in just a few moments one of my best friends in the Senate is going to give his farewell address. Senator MARK PRYOR of Arkansas, a former State legislator, former attorney general, and two-term Senator, was caught in this tidal wave in the last election that caused those of us in the Democratic Party in the former old Confederacy, now known as the South—and of course parts of the South these days don't look anything like the old Confederacy. As a matter of fact, my State of Florida is a good example. It is a compendium of people from all over the United States because folks from all over the country have moved to Florida, and thus it is a microcosm of the country.

Arkansas is a State where the Pryor family has served with great distinction and enormous public service for decades. Although it temporarily comes to an end with Senator PRYOR leaving the Congress in January, that is not the end of his public service. His mom and dad served so ably for years

and years in the Governor's mansion, as well as the Senate, serving the people of this country and Arkansas. MARK and his family served our country so ably over the years and that public service will continue.

JAY ROCKEFELLER

I reflect back just a few days ago when Senator ROCKEFELLER gave his farewell speech. He is another extraordinary public servant who has demonstrated selfless public service. He is a Senator who, because of his family heritage, could have done anything he wanted, but he chose—after a life of privilege, growing up as a young man, and after having spent time abroad—to go to one of the poorest States in the Union. He first was a volunteer to the poor and later developed a distinguished record of public service that included secretary of state, Governor, and now a five-term Senator. I will speak later about other colleagues who are leaving.

These are just two examples. Senator ROCKEFELLER and my seatmate Senator PRYOR are extraordinary public servants who when you talked to them and when you looked in their eyes, if they gave you their word, that was it. You didn't have to worry about it.

Some say it is a throwback to the old days. The old days is a throwback that we ought to go to, when if a Senator gave you his or her word, that was it, when there was civility among Senators, when there was not an avalanche of outside money that came in to try to define you with statements that were not true.

We see what has happened to our politics in America today with exceptional millions of dollars coming into a State, buying up television, to create a statement in 27 seconds often that is not true and that fact checkers say is not true, factcheck.org and Politifact.

Yet when we talk to the TV stations and the broadcast stations and show them the fact checkers, they will still run the TV ads. But rather than talk about the mistakes that were made with the Citizens United Supreme Court case and missing by one vote in this Chamber several years ago—we had 59 votes and we needed 60 to cut off debate so we could get to the DISCLOSE Act, a DISCLOSE Act that did not counter the Supreme Court decision, it just said if you are going to spend all this money, you are going to have to say who it is that is doing the contribution.

Of course, if we had been able to pass that, then all of this money would not be flowing because it is hiding behind this masquerade of the Committee for Good Government or the ABC committee for whatever. So they masquerade behind that veil to spend all of that money in order—for their ultimate purposes.

It caught a number of our people. Just look at what happened in the runoff election this last Saturday. Look at the imbalance of the spending on TV that occurred since the general elec-

tion and the runoff in the State of Louisiana.

I will speak about Senator LANDRIEU, Senator UDALL, Senator BEGICH, and Senator KAY HAGAN later.

I wanted particularly to talk about Senator ROCKEFELLER, our chairman of the commerce committee, and Senator PRYOR, one of the finest public servants I have ever had a chance to serve with.

“ORION” SPACECRAFT

Mr. NELSON. I want to speak about a very uplifting topic in more ways than one. Friday morning I was at the Cape. We call it the Cape. It is technically known as the Kennedy Space Center. America is going to Mars. The first test flight, the spacecraft *Orion*, put upon another rocket—in this case, a heavy-lift rocket called the Delta IV—twice orbited around the Earth. On that second orbit it was boosted up way beyond low-Earth orbit to 3,600 miles, and then with a ballistic reentry simulating 80 percent of the forces, the stresses on the spacecraft, the Gs, as well as the heat shield heating up to 4,000 degrees Fahrenheit in a spacecraft totally instrumented to check out the integrity of the spacecraft and the effectiveness of the heat shield as part of it—an ablative heat shield that burns off upon reentry—and it was a fantastic success.

I talked about this last week ahead of time just to give folks an idea of how large this is. The *Apollo* spacecraft was 12 feet in diameter. It looked like a similar kind of shape, a capsule. That was over four decades ago, 12 feet. *Orion* is 16½ feet and totally new technology, a new heat shield and up-to-date instrumentation that will carry four astronauts on our goal of our journey to the planet Mars in the decade of the 2030s.

This is what I wanted to share. Friday night after the launch with the extensive coverage that the news media gave, I was at a totally unrelated charity event for a children's hospital. I had people coming up to me and saying we didn't know that we had a space program. It is simply because they associated the shutdown of the space shuttle with the last flight of 135 flights—they associated that with the shutdown of the space program in the last flight of 2011 of the space shuttle.

They now see what has been happening behind the scenes all along, where indeed we are in a dual track in America's manned space program, the one track going to Mars way beyond low-Earth orbit where we have been for the last 40-some years. This is a low earth orbit that services the International Space Station where 6 humans are right now, about 250 miles above the Earth doing research in the program of going out and exploring the heavens. The second track of the dual track is, in fact, building American rockets, which is being done in a commercially viable way to go to and from